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Technology Planning

Currently at Van Bokkelen Elementary School there is no technology plan or technology committee. Although teachers have signed up for a technology committee, they have no clue what the purpose is. New technologies such as: projectors, document cameras, SMART Boards, and one SMART Table have been purchased in the last two years but no in depth training has occurred to best utilize these tools. In the school improvement plan, technology was mentioned as a way to reach all learners in math. However, staff development on integrating technology was not included in the plan even with teachers expected to use technology in one observed lesson. I believe that my school is in a good position where we can gather and enlist members to join the technology committee in order to develop a technology plan.

**Step 1: Get Administration on Board**

According to Mississippi’s State’s technology planning model phase 1 is to recruit and organize the planning team. Prior to putting together the team, administration buy in is crucial. I am fortunate enough to have a principal who wants the teachers to use our resources to the fullest potential. However, he has not utilized me as the e-coach to educate my co-workers on best practices of integrating technology. Because we have other focuses in staff development this year, I will need to get my principal to buy in to the idea that technology integration is just as important. As mentioned in my technology committee memo I can stress that the committee supports our school improvement plan which state, “We will provide opportunities for success for all "scholars" by implementing effective instructional practices, integrating technology with instruction…” I will stress to my principal that teachers would better use these technologies to improve learning, test scores, and better differentiate learning. Having my principal or vice principal apart of the committee during the first year will set the tone that technology is important.

**Step 2: Recruit Technology Committee Members**

The stakeholders for a well rounded committee are: the principal or vice principal, e-coach (myself), at least one primary and one intermediate teacher, at least one teacher from another content area such as special education, one teacher’s assistant, rotating technology support staff (we have 2), and at least one parent or community member. These individuals are key members that will contribute to our technology plan. Other interested parties are more than welcome to join. They are responsible to communicate with their group the decisions of the committee as well as communicate suggestions or decisions of their group to the committee. Specific roles for each stakeholder are more in depth in my committee memo.

During the first week back in August, I will briefly describe the purpose of the committee and find a quick inspiration video clip that illustrates how our students are a generation of new learners who need technology to motivate, challenge, and meet their needs. At the first PTA meeting or during back to school night I will give the same presentation to the parents to recruit membership. Additionally, I will promise yummy snacks for each meeting this year because food usually works to get buy in. Thank you notes will be written to parents, community members, and technology support staff to encourage them to attend. Meeting will take place during the allocated committee meeting time on the third Thursday of the month from 2:40-3:10 or on a Wednesday morning from 7:05-7:35 all depending on what works best for the committee.

**Step 3: Where are we? What Will Work for Us?**

After phase 1 has been established, phase 2 of Mississippi State’s planning model can begin which is to research what the needs of the school. Having an inventory of what technology and resources are in the building will help the committee understand what “stuff” we have. Next the committee will create and use one survey or multiple surveys for each specific stakeholder to assess where they are in terms of technology and what they want. Surveys can be created from [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) and/or as a paper survey. The committee could decide on using a pre-created survey such as the STaR survey from the International Society for Technology Education. [www.iste.org/inhouse/starchart/index.cfm?Section=STaRChart](http://www.iste.org/inhouse/starchart/index.cfm?Section=STaRChart). It would be beneficial if the committee gave rewards for those who completed the survey on time. These surveys will be the driving force in creating the technology plan, so aiming for 100 % participation will help us have accurate data. The committee will be able to determine the range of stages (entry, adoption, adaption, appropriation, invention) the staff is as described by Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow study.

**Step 4: Get Down to Business**

Once the committee is established and data has been collected, the team must develop a mission and vision. Frasier supports creating a vision as one of the “10 essentials elements of a successful technology plan.” Brainstorming as a group what we want the school and home to be like in terms of technology in five years will be another driving force. Parents will the greatest contribution to this vision because we are educating their children.

Using the vision for where we want to go and the data for where we are, specific goals based on our needs will be developed. Each stakeholder will take on a responsibility to better understand one of the goals. Each member will research the best practices of technology to clearly develop the goal, budget it, and establish a timeline with an evaluation during and at the end. For example, the primary teacher stakeholder will find information that supports that using Kidspiration assists in reading comprehension. He/she will determine what the costs will be, what staff development opportunities should occur, and how it was be assessed in a detailed timeline. In regards to staff development, the member who has strength in a certain area will assist the e-coach (me). So a parent who is proficient in Excel could co-teach the staff on how to transfer test scores in an Excel sheet.

For those committee members who are not comfortable with the responsibility of planning for each goal, they can work on the budget or brainstorm how to motivate teachers to use technology. It is important to have a wish list of technology and resources in case funds happen to appear. Also, another stakeholder such as a member from the community could find grants to fund these resources and/ or professional development sessions. The stakeholder who devises how to reward and motivate teachers will take in consideration that change takes time. They will advocate that teachers will need time to play, use, and create. Having a timeline that extends over a year will not make change as scary and overwhelming in the planning process.

**Sample Plan 1**

John Muir Elementary School’s technology plan grabbed my attention because the template was very similar to my school’s improvement plan. A brief explanation of the strategy, rationale, and evaluation procedure was described at the top of each section to give an overall idea of why the school created the plan and where the school wants to be in terms of technology. I wish the plan had a vision so that I could visualize the big picture of where they want to be in a few years. Next, ten specific activities were described in detail in an organized table. These activities had a professional development day assigned to it with who would be teaching it and a specific evaluation. When my committee is trying to find ways to evaluate our school’s technology I want to be specific like John Muir. I also want to have our plan organized in a table similar to our school improvement plan and John Muir’s so that my staff can easily follow the plan. The timeline was a period of three years at which concerned me because there was only one specific professional development date. If a new teacher came into the school the next year they would have missed that professional development. In the table was the resources needed for the activity and where the funding would come from. However, the plan did not give the budget for these activities as well as the cost for the resources. Finally, I wish that the plan referred to the national technology standards to support their decisions.

<http://www.seattleschools.org/schools/muir/MuirTechPlan2007.pdf>

**Sample Plan 2**

Aldert Root Elementary School’s instructional technology plan had almost all the components of Mississippi State’s recommendations of an effective plan. The table of contents included a link for the introduction, vision statement, scenario, action plan, key issues, computer inventory, survey data, survey results, consensus, and specific goals for integrating technology. What impressed me was the scenario which described what a technology rich classroom would be like at their school. This would be great for our parents to understand what it would be like if their child attended Van Bokkelen. I also liked the long range action plan which went in specific details of what would happen each school year for each goal. I want to put the key issues as discovered through the survey in the plan to be able to assess if the plan is working. Finally, I loved how each grade level had their own specific goals based on the needs of the students and teachers. However, this plan did not state who was responsible for the professional development and how much it would cost for the training and resources. Just as the previous sample plan, the national technology standards were also missing from the plan.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20061208063156rn_1/aldertrootes.wcpss.net/techplan99.html>

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